



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 Friday, March 9, 2018

CONTACT:
 Jose Ysea at 858-518-8210 or jysea@sandiego.gov

James Gartland to Head City’s Lifeguard Division

CURRENT LIFEGUARD CHIEF RICK WURTS RETIRES TODAY AFTER 30 YEARS OF PROTECTING SAN DIEGO’S BEACHES AND WATERWAYS

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department today introduced James Gartland as its new interim Chief of the Lifeguard Division. Gartland has served in the Lifeguard Division for 23 years, including the last two as a Marine Safety Captain.

“James Gartland is a natural fit to lead our Lifeguard Division,” said Fire-Rescue Chief Brian Fennessy. “He is an exceptional leader with an impressive record as a life-saving professional. Our waters and beaches will remain well-protected with his continued guidance.”

Gartland succeeds Rick Wurts in the position. Wurts announced his retirement last month and is working his last shift today after 30 years of service with the Lifeguard Division.

Chief Wurts has served in Operations, as well as a variety of other assignments including Regional Lifeguard Academy Coordinator, Training Section Coordinator and in hiring and promotional coordination. He has also played an important leadership role in the region serving as both the Vice Chair and Chair of the San Diego Regional Aquatic Lifesaving Emergency Response Taskforce (SDR ALERT).

“Chief Wurts has done a tremendous job and we can’t thank him enough for keeping San Diegans and visitors safe for the past three decades,” said Chief Fennessy, who announced Thursday that he has accepted a Chief position in Orange County. “While his retirement has been in the works for a while, I’m also leaving soon and decided to make an interim appointment so the next Fire-Rescue Chief can make the final decision on who will lead the Lifeguard Division.”

Gartland, a member of the Type 3 San Diego All Hazards Incident Management Team, also served as the Chair of the SDR ALERT and the Area Maritime Security Subcommittee on Preventative Radiological Nuclear Detection. He spent 18 months as the Regional Maritime Emergency Preparedness Manager with the City’s Office of Homeland Security.

“I could not be more honored or humbled to accept the interim position of Lifeguard Chief. We have the best trained, most prepared first responders helping to protect our coastline, and I am confident we’ll continue to keep San Diegans and visitors safe,” said Gartland.

Gartland graduated from San Diego State University with a degree in Business Administration/Accounting. His continuing education includes participation in the Wharton College Mission Critical Team Professional Development Program.

In addition to dedicating his career to public service, Gartland demonstrates his commitment to the San Diego community through volunteer efforts. He is currently the Vice President of Old Town Academy School Advisory Board and has volunteered with the San Diego Coastkeeper, the Clairemont Hilltoppers Little League and has been an officer with San Diego Lifesaving Association and the San Diego Association for Lifeguards. Utilizing his business background and degree in accounting, Gartland is a former fiduciary and trustee of the San Diego City Employees Retiree Medical Trust.

###